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AMERICAN ART NEWS

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INJUSTICE TO EXHIBITORS

Between March 2 and March 8 there were twenty-six press views of art exhibitions in the New York galleries. With the best intentions in the world, the art writers simply cannot visit and report any such number of art exhibitions as the dealers have "bunched" during the first week of March. As a consequence neither the exhibiting artists, the galleries nor the reading public will get their due. THE AMERICAN ART NEWS suffers with the daily newspapers the same handicaps of time and space in which to review properly and justly all current art shows.

The theatres have found it necessary to arrange their opening nights so that critics can make the rounds. It would be well for the local art galleries to take cognizance of the situation so that the first and third weeks of each month will not constitute nightmare periods for the art writers.

At any rate, if the galleries and the artists feel they are not receiving their just dues in the matter of space in the art columns of the daily press and THE AMERICAN ART NEWS, this system of crowding too many openings within the space of one week must be held solely to blame.

Another cause of injustice to everybody concerned is the frequent unpreparedness of an exhibition when the critic appears in response to an invitation. This is proved by such expressions as "the pictures had not arrived when we went to look at the show," or "the pictures were not arranged," or, as one critic noted, "the sculptures were on the sidewalk when I went to see the exhibition," which is not a good place to see sculptures, as anyone will agree.

REGISTRATION OF PICTURES

Within the last two months four movements have achieved definite form in the United States, France and Belgium, for the permanent registration of pictorial art, the avowed purpose of three of them being to prevent frauds and false attributions as well as to keep a record of all contemporary work. To a degree, this is applying the method of national copyright offices to art but as only one of these agencies has any great amount of money or physical facilities to carry out its plans, it is a question as to how long they may be continued without government aid. It is to be hoped they will make their efforts so effective that this aid will be forthcoming. For registration of art works is of quite as great importance as is that of keeping copyrights, yet it has been completely neglected except by private enterprise, and that only in England.

In the United States the most important of these registration agencies is the Frick library of art which is being conducted by the estate of Henry Clay Frick in connection with the Frick art museum. The Frick library is modelled on that of Robert Clermont Witt of London, the aim being to file a photographic reproduction of every painting or drawing known to the Western World from the year 1300 to 1850. The problem of keeping a record since 1850 is met by establishing the rule that the Frick library will keep records of only such artists as have their work in national galleries. As will be seen this is purely a library of record but its potential value is enormous.

The second American organization is a committee that has been formed in Washington "for the purpose of making a registry of the works of art in private ownership, such as sculpture, paintings and art objects." This, again, is limited in its scope, but it will serve to add pressure to the nationalization of this general idea.

THE AMERICAN ART NEWS has already told of the proposal of Jef Leempoels, Belgian artist, that his government establish a public office for the registration of all works of art "to prevent future frauds or mistakes in the sale of such works," a plan that contains a really constructive idea. This has the limitation of being applied only to contemporary artists, as is the plan established in France by the Ministry of Fine Arts through the agency known as the Service d'Etudes Artistique.

It would be a great thing for the whole world of art if all governments would follow the lead of France and establish a national bureau for recording works of art. These might not correct past errors, but they would do much to prevent errors and frauds in the future.

Obituary

ROBERT B. BRANDEGEE

Robert Bolling Brandegee, portrait and landscape painter, of Hartford, Conn., died March 5 at his country home, Framington, Conn. He was 74 years of age. He is survived by two sons and two sisters.

Mr. Brandegee was born in Berlin, Conn., and was educated in the public schools. He studied in Paris under Jacques son de La Chevereuse at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. He won a medal in a Paris exhibition, and was awarded two medals in the St. Louis Exposition in 1904. He was made an Associate National Academician in 1909. He executed a number of notable mural decorations. A fine portrait of the artist by Harold A. Geen was recently shown in the display of the Ten Hartford Artists.

Review of Exhibitions

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color, recording the engagement between the "Chesapeake" and the "Shannon" is by Thomas Whitcombe, while the siege of Yorktown is the subject of a very quaint old French engraving.

In addition to these works are a number of terra cotta, bronze and Sevres busts, and terra cotta and Wedgewood medallions of Washington, Franklin and others by such artists as J. D. Nini, Le Riche, and David d'Angers.

Casilear Cole—Antonio Salemme

Twelve portraits in oil by Casilear Cole and six pieces of sculpture by Antonio Salemme are exhibited together at the Art Center until March 18. Mr. Cole, whose work has been seen here before at the National Academy, studied in Boston and Paris, and later received criticism from John S. Sargent in London. His portraits are notable for their sincerity, and have been appreciated not "because they are madly new, but because they are sanely modern."

Antonio Salemme also studied in Boston and afterward went to Italy, where he worked for seven years in the studio of Angelo Zanelli. Upon his return to this country he exhibited at the National Academy, the Pennsylvania Academy, and at the Architectural League. His exhibition at the Art Center includes five portrait busts and one figure.

Ernest Lawson's South Shore

Within the compass of a short distance around the house he occupied last summer at Bellport, Long Island, Ernest Lawson found many picturesque subjects, proof of which is to be seen in his "Paintings of the South Shore" hung in the Daniel Gallery, through March 21. The sea gulls interested Mr. Lawson immensely and they appear in four of his eighteen canvases, their graceful forms patterned against the white sand and sparse green grass of the dunes in a most engaging manner.

In one of these canvases, "Incoming Tide," the sea birds are actually modelled in paint and stand out from the surface in low relief. There is always something of the humorous about these birds and this feeling Mr. Lawson caught admirably in the picture called "Gulls Feeding." They are very serious about deglutition and that point has not been lost in this representation.

In spite of its bulk there is an element of delicacy in the real sand dune, due to the pale tones of the sand and the beach grass. One is made to feel this to the full in the "Dunes and Sea," in the exquisite canvas entitled "Fog," and in the "Coast Guards' Hut." How firmly Mr. Lawson has resisted the spell of Renoir is shown in the "Windy Day" with its red-roofed house, a composition and a color scheme presenting just the tones and forms the French master loved to paint. That Mr. Lawson has vigor as well as delicacy of vision and color is amply demonstrated in the "Shack in Winter" and "Black Ducks—Dawn," the last-named canvas marked for its elements of motion in the flying ducks and the power in its darkling color scheme.

Lucia D. Leffingwell's Portraits

In the head of C. R. Parkes, Lucia D. Leffingwell shows how thoroughly she is at home in handling pastels, in the exhibition of her portraits, landscapes and marines that are on view in the Ainslie Galleries through March. The portrait of Mr. Parkes is grave in handling and fine in color and shows the ease of the original in his task of posing as it does that of the artist in her work.

The portrait sketches of "Anita" and of Clarence Narromore, although very slight, have the same feeling of authority, and this appreciation can be applied to the heads of "Ruth" and "Benny," the blonde prettiness of each of these children being admirably recorded on these canvases.

Varied Exhibit at Galerie Intime

The Galerie Intime is showing paintings which have been chosen for their response to the needs of the decorative, with special emphasis on flower subjects suitable for overmantel pieces. The field seems to be one in which women artists do much credit to themselves.

Dorothea Litzinger, with her paintings and plastic panels, treats her subject with greatest freedom, but the liberties she takes with botany seem only to increase the effectiveness of the result. Jane Peterson also paints flowers, peonies and roses, with a fine suggestion of the texture of their glossy petals. May Fairchild and Helen Turner have both been interested in the contrast of red and gold, and Felicie Howell in the deep ivory of mignonette and roses.

Spencer Nichols' "Flowers and Pool" has striking originality of design—the dark circle of water with its water lilies outlined by the sun-touched margin. Jane Freeman's portrait is sympathetic and especially pleasing, and Charles S. Chapman's handling of a forest scene in winter is such as to make it especially suitable to decorative purposes. G. Glenn Newell, Spencer Nichols, Chauncey F. Ryder, Hobart Nichols and George Elmer Browne are also contributors to the exhibition.

The F. Soulé Campbell drawings and reproductions are shown at the same gallery. These portraits are all of notable persons in the field of literature and art as well as politics—Mark Twain, Stevenson, Clemenceau, Emmy Destinn, Lloyd George and Sarah Bernhardt, to name only a few. All of them are interesting as examples of a particularly fine type of portraiture. Both exhibitions last through March 18.

Early and Late Inness Canvases

Early and later phases of the art of George Inness are shown in the group of nine of his paintings on view in the Howard Young Galleries through March 18. In point of time the first of these is one entitled "Early Recollections," dating from the period when Inness was painting pictures resembling those of the English landscape school of the XVIII century in general and Constable in particular. This is a notably handsome picture and the color is of a brilliancy unmatched by the later works.

There are two small landscapes, one of a New England scene, simple to the point of austerity, the other showing the beginnings of the manner that led to the painting of the period of the well-known "Approaching Storm."

Inness' Italian days are recalled by the upright canvas called "Genzano, Italy," dated 1847 and painted in the romantic vein, a castle-crowned height in the background bathed in soft bright light from the unseen sun with the inevitable picturesque peasants in the foreground.

"The Oaks, Durham, 1879," is of his middle

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IN MEMORIAM

JAMES BLISS TOWNSEND

Died March 11, 1921

By Charles Hammond Gibson

How many of us, in mourning the death of a valued friend, take up the pen with a mind filled with impulsive thoughts of his many varied qualities, wishing to do him honor and record a truthful estimate of his character. But we discard many perhaps as unworthy of public attention, or too personal to be presented to the public view. And so we allow the first hour, when grief touches the intellect, to slip by and hew an inadequate tribute to more conventional lines. But I sometimes wonder whether that first impulse is not the best offering to our friends and to those who unconsciously read the qualities of a man into their own lives.

What's in the brain, that ink can character, if it be not the sum of human qualities in a mind stored with essentially human elements? For it is the human, after all, which perhaps touches us more truly than any other quality, whether it be in public men or private citizens. It is this side to the character of the late James Bliss Townsend which must seen to be most apparent in the recollection of those who knew him best; more perhaps than his ability as a public speaker on questions of national and international moment; more than his useful activities in the patriotic societies in which he took a prominent part; more even than his practical interest in the field of art.

Born in New York on September 30, 1855, his life's work was that of a journalist, an editor and an author. He was the son of Dwight and Emily Hodges Townsend and attended St. Paul's School, Concord, N. H., as a boy. In 1878 he took an A.B. degree at Princeton University and later, in 1883, that of A. M. on a thesis entitled "Art Progress in America", thus indicating that appreciation of painting and its allied arts which was to play such a part in his future life. The same year that he took his degree as Bachelor of Arts he began his journalistic work as correspondent at Princeton College for the New York *Tribune*. And if we had access to the files of that period we should doubtless discover in his contributions to this paper that alertness of intellect, that quickness of perception, and the sympathetic appreciation of what was finest, which was one of his distinguishing characteristics.

He became a member of the city staff of the New York *Tribune* and in 1879 was made editor of *Art Interchange*. From 1881 to 1887 he was art editor of the New York *World*, after which he was the manager and secretary of the Press News Association and a writer on art topics. From 1894 to 1900 he was art critic of the New York *Times* and brought to that important department a wealth of knowledge on art matters and a broad sympathy with modern painters, as well as a more matured study of the great masters. As a critic he was never cold, never indifferent to sincere effort, never unduly swayed by personal feeling where the public was concerned.

It has been said that true criticism is appreciation, not merely appreciation of what is bad, but also of what is good, as well as what is indifferent. The sense of balance should be preserved and pointed out to those who would learn from what the critic has to tell us, and thus lead us to an understanding of the whole. Bruntiére once wittily remarked: *"les critics sont laids; les poëtes sont beaux."* But Mr. Townsend was never ugly. He was quick to perceive beauty where beauty was manifest, and to show his appreciation of it. And he never would willingly wound at the expense of an artist's feeling.

He loved art and all the pleasant things of life with the exuberance of a boy, combining to an extraordinary degree the maturity of years well spent in toil, with the enthusiasm of youth undaunted by the disappointments of life. Fortunate indeed were those of his friends who enjoyed this resilient side of his character. They will recall in years to come the refreshing hours spent in his company; the conversation that never lacked for entertainment; the wit that was ever present; the humor that bubbled to the surface and would not down, turning dull drama into comedy; the alert mentality stored with anecdote and historical reminiscence; and withal the intelligent common sense of his discussion of public questions.

I have delayed too long, I fear, this brief estimate of some of his many admirable traits. But it has been said that it is never too late to record the fine characteristics of a friend. And it is as a friend, perhaps, that he will be best remembered and his many lovable qualities recalled by those to whom he gave freely of a spirit that breathed nothing of the cold air of death. His passing from life was in itself indicative of his youthful vitality. For it would not have been easy to picture him bowed by the weight of years, broken by sorrow, or his mind dimmed by the frosts of approaching winter. To the end he retained the poetry of life in the full radiance of the sun, and where the clouds passed his friends rarely, if ever, saw them reflecting their shadows.

And thus he lived and died, loyal to those he loved,
And loved by those whose loyalty he claimed.